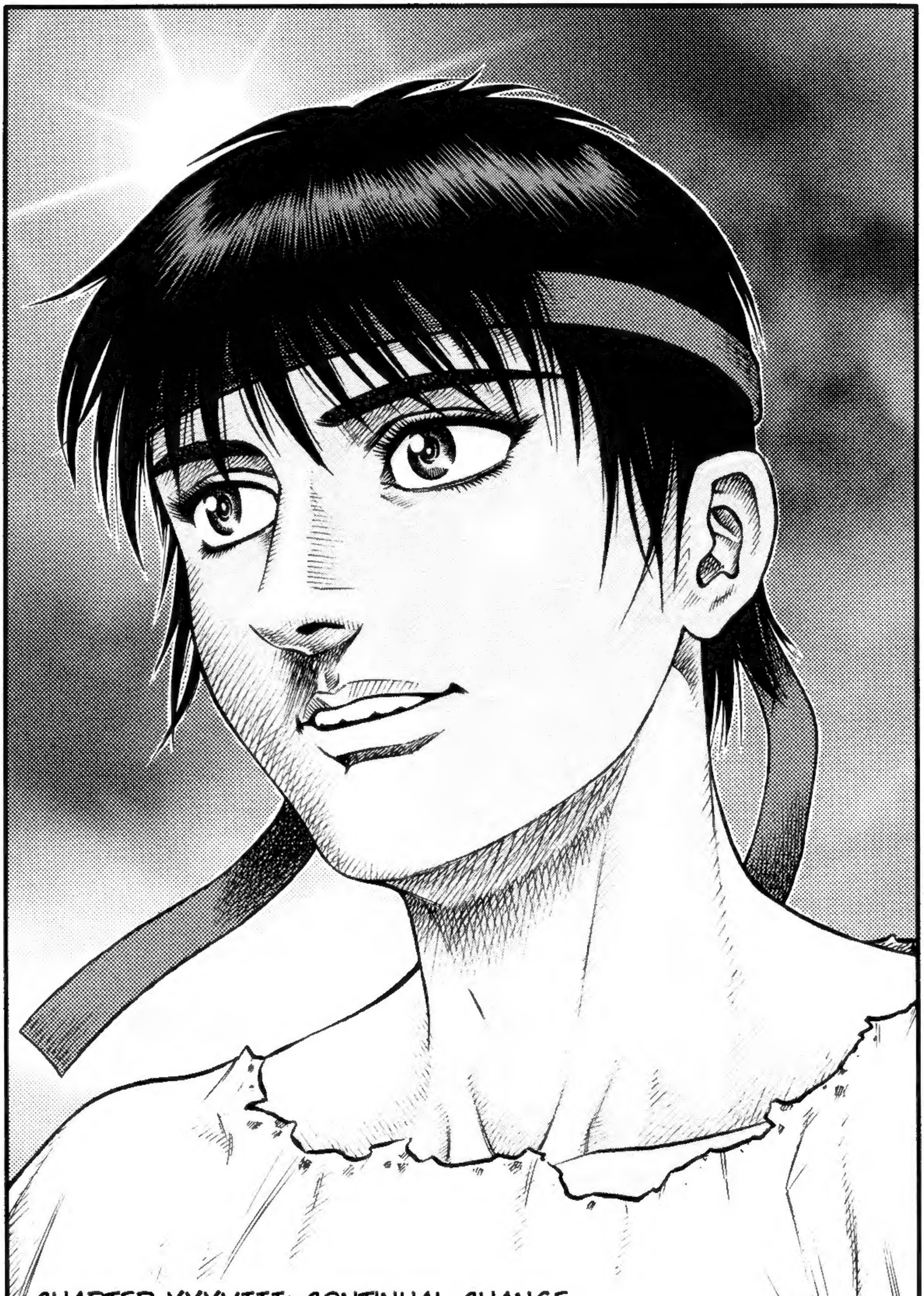

CHAPTER XXXVIII: CONTINUAL CHANGE

EXPLAIN YOURSELVES!

SO YOU'RE TELLING ME HE'S GONE?!

I WILL NOT TOLERATE THOSE WHO PLOT AGAINST ME!

YOU BLOODY IMBECILES!

WE'RE NOT ENTIRELY SURE YOUR MAJESTY...

TAKE THIS!

TAKE THIS!

WHO WAS THE TRAITOR?! CONFESS!

SOMEONE MUST HAVE COME AND HELPED HIM!

DO YOU THINK HE COULD'VE ESCAPED BY HIMSELF?!

IT...

IT COULDN'T HAVE BEEN, MOTHER...!

IT WAS MERELY ONE SLAVE.

YOU'RE ACTING QUITE UNSIGHTLY WITH REGARDS TO HIS DISAPPEARANCE.

WHAT'S THIS? YOU'VE BEEN CAUSING A COMMOTION SINCE MORNING.

!!

!!

!!

TO JUST GO AND DO THAT...

WHATEVER FOR MOTHER?!

YES, I BANISHED THE BOY MYSELF.

TO KEEP NEARBY ME...

I BOUGHT HIM...

A VULGAR SLAVE BOXER DOES NOT SUIT THE PALACE...

IT'S ONLY NATURAL RIGHT?

NEARBY YOU...?

HE WAS NO LONGER A SLAVE BOXER THOUGH!

ITS THE TRUTH.

I THOUGHT IT A GOOD THING THAT I...

SAVED CESTVS...

NO.

SO, BY HAVING HIM NEAR TO YOU, WHAT DID YOU INTEND TO DO TO HIM NERO...?

BIND HIM IN CHAINS, TAKE PLEASURE IN TORMENTING HIM?

BEAT HIM WITH A ROD...

YESTER-DAY I...

WAS SIMPLY ANNOYED BY CHANCE.

YOU INTENDED TO BUY HIS FAVOUR, YET...

ふむ...

HE WOULD NOT SHOWER YOU WITH ADORATION, SO YOUR TEMPER FLARED, RIGHT?

HOW PATHETIC...

I'LL TELL YOU WHAT THAT BOY SAID HIMSELF.

LISTEN NERO.

I... I'M...!

INDEED, THERE WOULD BE NO WORTH IN HIS MAJESTY RAISING SUCH A STRAY DOG.

IT'D BE LIKE A SINGLE DOG ESCAPING, PLEASE OVERLOOK IT.

I WASN'T SERIOUS ABOUT IT...

IT WAS A SLIP OF A TONGUE...

WHEN I MENTIONED HIM BEING A DOG...

YOU INTENDED TO LOCK THAT CHILD UP TO STOP HIM FLEEING...

YET YOU WERE THE ONE WHO ENDED UP FLEEING INTO THE CONFINES OF YOUR OWN SHELL...

THAT'S YOUR WEAK-NESS.

WITHOUT SHOWING HIM YOUR MAGNANIMITY AS MASTER, YOU REFUTED HIM WITH YOUR EXTREME CONDUCT.

EVEN A VULGAR SLAVE HAS SOME DEGREE OF DIGNITY.

N...

YOU DON'T WISH FOR YOURSELF TO BE HURT, SO YOU CAN DO NOTHING BUT HURT YOUR POOR PARTNERS.

NOT AT ALL...

FAR FROM HUMAN COMPASSION...

YOU DIDN'T EVEN HAVE THE COURAGE TO DISCOVER HIS TRUE INTENTIONS, SO BOUND HIM WITH CHAINS INSTEAD.

BUT MOTHER...

ARE THE HEAD OF THE CAESAR FAMILY, THE SOVEREIGN OF THE ENTIRE WORLD!

YOU...

STAY FOCUSED DOMITIUS!

WITH YOUR GREATNESS YOU MUST GUIDE ROME AS IMPERATOR!

PLEASE, DO WHAT YOU MUST!

YOU MUST FACE REALITY AS THE EMPEROR NERO.

FOR WHAT I THINK OF THINGS!

BUT MOTHER, YOU DON'T CARE AT ALL...

THINGS CAN NEVER GO BACK...

TO HOW THEY WERE BETWEEN US!

YOU CAN'T FLEE!

YOU'VE NOWHERE TO RUN FROM US!

YOU WERE SO COLD AFTER ALL!

I WAS ONLY A LITTLE UNKIND WASN'T I?!

NOT JUST ONCE, BUT TWICE!

YOU'VE BETRAYED ME!

NO MATTER WHERE YOU MAY GO AND LOITER, I HOPE YOU DIE A DOG'S DEATH!

YOU UNGRATEFUL, LOWLY DOG!

YOU'VE BETRAYED ME AGAIN CESTVS!

...

NEVER AGAIN...

WILL I SHOW YOU SYMPATHY...

AT THE SAME TIME ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF ROME...

HEY, YOU THERE.

WHERE'S YOUR REPRESENTATIVE?

A GUEST?

I'D LIKE TO HAVE A WORD WITH YOUR BOSS.

ス..

...

BY THE END OF TODAY I'LL HAVE LEFT THE AREA.

I'M CLOSING UP SHOP...

IT'S AS IT LOOKS...

I I I

BURP...

WHAT BUSINESS DO YOU HAVE WITH ME?

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コキュ

GOOD SIR.

ARE YOU DRISCO?

THE HEAD OF DRISCO'S BOXING TROUPE?

AH...

THAT'S RIGHT.

ムム...

I'D LIKE YOU TO TAKE THIS SLAVE BOXER.

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THAT LITTLE MISS, A BOXER?!

...

THAT MUST BE A JOKE GOOD SIR!

IN FACT, IT WAS THE WILL OF HER MAJESTY, THE ALL TERRIBLE EMPRESS DOWAGER.

LEND ME YOU EAR.

THIS WAS A SECRET ORDER.

THIS SMELLS FISHY...

SO THAT'S THE REASON?

I MEAN, AREN'T THERE OTHER SLAVE BOXER TRAINING SCHOOLS IN THE AREA?

YOU'RE REALLY TRYING TO TAKE ME FOR SOME PLAIN OLD DRUNKARD ARE YOU?

I DON'T WANT ANY TROUBLE NOW, SIR...

HE HAS TO END UP AWAY FROM ROME.

THUS IT WOULD BE BEST TO ENTRUST HIM TO SOMEONE WHO TRAVELS, LIKE YOURSELF.

SO, HOW MUCH FOR HIM...?

HMMPH.

THIS WON'T CAUSE YOU ANY TROUBLE, IT'S MERELY THE SALE OF A SINGLE SLAVE BOXER OF THE EMPEROR'S.

WHAT A LAUGH!

50,000?!

...

IT'S A REASONABLE AMOUNT...

50,000 SESTERTIUS.

SO YOU WANT TO DISPOSE OF HIM NO MATTER WHAT?

IN FACT, YOU DIDN'T CARE TO OFFER AN ASKING PRICE!

YOU ASKED DIDNT YOU?!

SO SAYING THAT, HOW ABOUT WE HAVE A TEST...

IF HE'S WORTH THE MONEY AS A FIGHTER I'LL GLADY WELCOME HIM IN.

I GO BY A SIMPLE, CLEAR ENOUGH MOTTO...

IF THEY'RE STRONG, I'LL BUY THEM.

I'VE A TEST FOR YOU!

OI, YOU BASTARDS, GET HERE A SEC!

GET TOGETHER!

ANYONE WILL DO!

YOU'LL BE FACING THIS ONE HERE!

OI, HOW ABOUT THE KIDS?

IF YOU CAN KNOCK OUT THIS ONE, I'LL DOUBLE YOUR DINNER!

SHIT, THEY'RE A CALCULATING LOT...

KAAAH.

I'LL BEAT 'EM QUICK.

^^:

I'LL TAKE 'EM ON BOSS!

I'LL DO IT!

IT SHOULD WORK HAVING TWO MIDGETS FIGHT ONE ANOTHER.

VERY WELL...

PEDRO EH...

AAALRIGHT, JUST GET READY.

HM.

I'M WAY BIGGER!

I AIN'T A MIDGET!

HEY NOW...

TAKE OFF THEIR SHACKLES!

…

ニル…

THOUGH I'M ANNOYED FOR ALL SORTS OF REASONS!

WELL IF IT'S A TEST YOU WANT SO BE IT.

IT'S STILL MORNING AFTER ALL...

NO NEED.

WE'VE RUN OUT OF SNACKS BUT...

ウム…

WELL NOW, WANT ONE...

HEH.

I WONDER WHO THAT'LL BE.

THOUGH IF ONE OF YOU GIVES UP WE'LL ALSO END IT.

WITH YOU KIDS THERE WON'T BE A LIMIT, SIMPLY GO UNTIL IT'S SETTLED.

BEGIN!

IT SHOULD'VE BEEN TO A BROTHEL!

IF YOU WERE GONNA BE SOLD...

YOU'D BE BETTER OFF PICKING FLOWERS.

WHAT'S WITH THAT LOOK...

TCH.

YOU MADE A MISTAKE COMING HERE, MISS.

...!

GAH!

ドドド

...!

DO I PASS?

ｻﾜﾜﾜ..

ｻﾜﾜﾜ...

NO...

OI...

DID YOU SEE THAT JUST NOW...?

EH, IT'S OVER?

SAME FOR ME...

I LOOKED OVER THERE AND MISSED IT...

HOW ABOUT YOU...

AN...

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ｻﾜﾜﾜ..

BY SHEER CHANCE...

ｻﾜﾜﾜ..

MAY WELL HAVE FALLEN INTO MY LAP...!

INCREDIBLE GOLDEN EGG...

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MY MEASLY LIFE...

MY MEASLY BODY, HOLD NOTHING...

MY EMPTY PALMS...

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ﾌﾞﾙﾙ

THESE TWO FISTS ALONE KEEP ME ALIVE.

MY MASTER TAUGHT ME MY SKILLS, SO...

MY MASTER GAVE ME A NAME.

I DON'T KNOW ANYTHING... ABOUT THIS WIDE WORLD...

NOR EVEN THE REAL NAME OF MY PARENTS

MASTER...!

CHAPTER XXXVIII: CONTINUAL: CHANGE - END